

OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

OLYMPIC COAST DISCOVERY CENTER



V O L U N T E E R N E W S L E T T E R - M A R C H 2 0 1 1

Coming Events

March 23 - Brown Bag lunch;
tentative speaker from Marine
Spills Response Corporation

April 7 - Ice Cream Social /
Kickoff for volunteer training

April 14 - Volunteer training
Thursdays through May 5

April 23 - Washington Coastal Cleanup
and Earth Day Port Angeles

May 12 - Field trip to Cape Flattery
and Makah Cultural Center

May 19 - Tidepool exploration and
Potluck Picnic at Salt Creek

June 29 through July 6 - Volunteer exchange
with Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary



Coastal Cleanup on April 23

Many of you participate in the Washington Coastal Cleanup. If you have participated in the past you have probably already been contacted by CoastSavers and may have signed up again this year. However, if you choose to stay in Port Angeles that weekend, there's a new opportunity for you to get involved locally. Paul Cronauer, owner of the Landing Mall, is spearheading "Earth Day Port Angeles" to clean up local beaches and call attention to the growing problem of marine debris. He requested that we open the Olympic Coast Discovery Center for the weekend, as our building will be headquarters for the event, with live music, a community potluck, a yard sale and other special happenings. I am also hoping to gather a team of staff and volunteers to clean a mile of beach on Ediz Hook. If you are available to help out on Saturday, April 23, either in the OCDC or on the beach, please let me know.

Volunteer Advisory Committee

Several volunteers have offered to serve on the new OCDC volunteer advisory committee, but we welcome anyone else who would like to participate. Functions include helping to establish a mentoring program for new volunteers, suggesting guest speakers and special enrichment events, and suggesting ways the volunteer experience can be improved. Please let me know if you would like to serve on this committee.



Ice Cream Social on April 7

A special event to welcome new volunteers. Even before training starts we want to show potential new volunteers how much fun it will be to volunteer with Olympic Coast. I am putting together a slide show of special events from the last six years and would love to have you veteran volunteers narrate. Field trips to Maui, Seattle Aquarium, Cape Flattery, Salt Creek, festivals, school groups, trips on the Tatoosh, parties, canoe landings, guest speakers – what has made volunteering interesting for you? Please consider sharing your special experiences with others by letting me know which slides you are willing to narrate. The fun begins at 2:00 on Thursday, April 7 in our classroom. Please invite friends and neighbors who might be interested in joining the group. We are also looking at the possibility of offering volunteer training in the evenings, hoping to reach potential volunteers who work during the day or have other commitments on Thursdays.

Thunder Bay Exchange, part 2

We have just received confirmation of the dates for our trip to Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, leaving June 29 and returning July 6, so that we will be on hand to help with their big Heritage Festival on July 4. Meaghan Black, TBNMS Volunteer Coordinator, has promised an itinerary next week, but meanwhile we can begin looking for airline tickets. I have heard from Jim and Trish Fedderly, Bill and Sherrill Bjorklund, Deborah and Steve Moriarty, Bruce and Gerri Ferguson, and maybe Rose Forbes; if anyone else is interested please let me know. Meaghan assures me that they have housing available for as many people as we want to bring, so you are all welcome to participate even if you were unable to host guests last summer.

I have heard nothing further from the Shaw Ocean Discovery Center about their trip to Port Angeles in April, but I will let everyone know when they contact me again.

Exploration of Endeavour and Lost City: Implications for life in the oceans and our solar system

The title of this presentation may have been enough to discourage many people from attending, but for the two dozen people who came to hear Alden Denny on February 19, this was a fascinating lecture.

First Denny talked about mid-ocean ridges which contain the youngest, hottest rocks on our planet. In

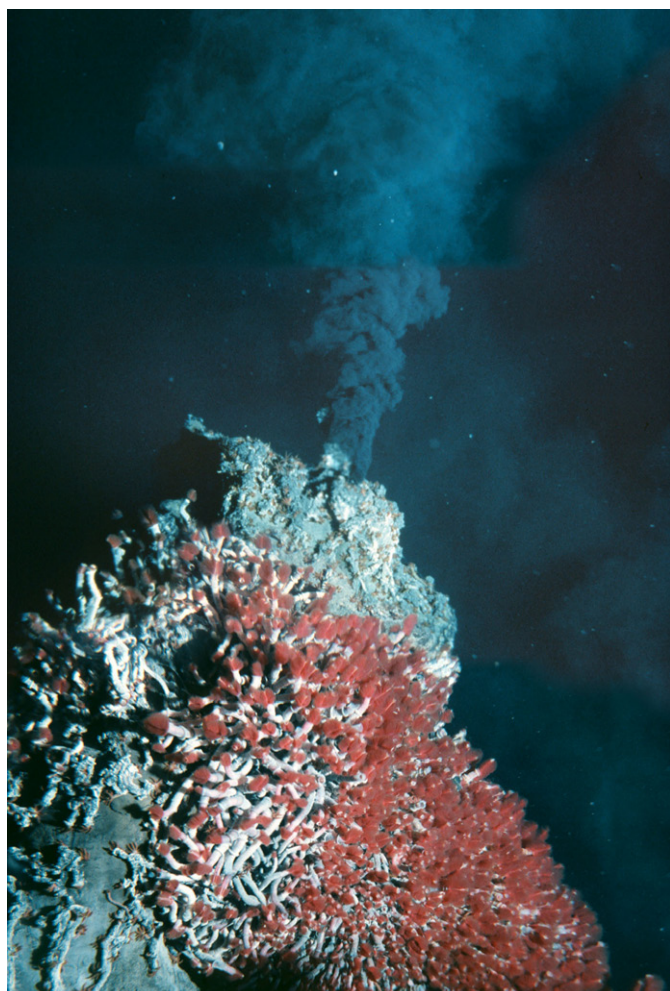
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these areas ocean water seeps through recent lava flows, gets super heated by subsurface magma, and boils out through vents. 230 such vents have been discovered worldwide, and marine geologists are finding about five more every year. The 400° C water is filled with carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, and heavy metals. Here novel organisms use volcanic gases and toxic metals for energy, and optimally live at 200° F.



Endeavour, 209 miles west of La Push and 7000' deep, on the Juan de Fuca spreading ridge, is one of the most vigorously venting systems in the world, with 100 black smokers in 100 meters. The vents grow as much as six feet in three days, but don't survive very long due to intense seismic activity – up to 12,000 earthquakes a year. Around the vents the seafloor is covered with a community of tube worms, clams, crabs and other organisms found nowhere else on earth.

Lost City Hydrothermal field, a much more recent discovery, is located on top of the Atlantis Massif, a 14,000' mountain about 7 miles west of the mid-Atlantic ridge. Carbonate towers up to 60 meters (180 feet) grow only about 1 inch per year, and are thought to be up to 120,000 years old. At Lost City the water temperature is lower than at black smokers, and it's extremely alkaline, composed of methane and hydrogen. Although the organisms found at Lost City are much smaller than those at black smokers, many unique species are located within the porous channels and crevices of the carbonate towers.

Denny's presentation was richly illustrated with video from exploration of both areas, and a highlight of the evening was handling a large section of a vent wall from Endeavour filled with pyrite crystals. Denny's conclusion was that these hydrothermal areas may be representative of the earliest habitat on earth, and represent two possible sites for the origin of life on our planet.

For more information on this fascinating topic check out <http://www.lostcity.washington.edu>